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MYSTERY

OR

THE LADY OF THE CASINO

DAVID F. TAYLOR

33

(D. F. Taylor)
NBS

MYSTERY

OR

THE LADY OF THE CASINO

BY

DAVID F. TAYLOR

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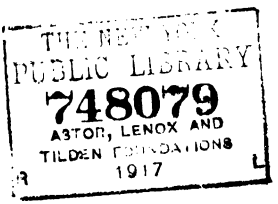

The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.

TO

THE LOVERS OF FREEDOM AND PEACE

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED, FOR

YOUR SYMPATHY AND APPROVAL

BY

D. F. TAYLOR

"POET OF THE CHAPARREAL"

★ PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY.

MYSTERY, OR THE LADY OF THE CASINO

CANTO I

ETERNAL love is not a dull symposer,
It is a feast that in the soul is wrought,
It is divine, how can it be a loser,
Living supremely in sweet silent thought;
It laughs to scorn the laws of petrifaction,
And ever will with failing time prevail.
The sentient gives but little satisfaction,
But this eternal thing will never fail;
I wonder if the eyes that measure time
Are looking on while I indite this rhyme.

2

The dewdrops on the rose appear newborn
At early dawn, although they fade away.
They are ambassadors to greet the morn
That speak of love, and live in memory;
And so I write of love—a maiden fair,
A handsome youth, intelligent and wise
She had the caste and the patrician air
And he had ways that won the maiden's eyes
So well they met, so well they stood together
Like golden links you would not wish to sever.

3

I saw them first at Santa Cruz; they walked
Upon the pier fronting the Casino
They were quite ardent, earnestly they talked,
Moving in measured pace, stately and slow,
And as they passed the crowd would look around
She was so beautiful, and he forsooth
So noble looking you hardly could have found
A finer specimen of noble youth.
I stood upon the pier, and looked that way
The evening shadows marked the closing day.

4

I watched them as they slowly walked away
I saw the sun sink in the sea
And something spoke so touchingly
Although they nothing were to me
And as I mused I saw a face
From out the semi-darkness come
A face that was devoid of grace
A demon face this is the sum
A man walked past; and if the devil drew
His likeness, then that picture was in view.

5

I marked his form; the shoulders broad
The thick-set neck, the limbs so strong
The jerky pace, the steps so odd
(His side-view showed a nose quite long)
The marked projection of the chin
The heavy jaw, the sensual mouth
The piercing eyes, so filled with sin;
He stepped quite brisk, and went down south
I watched, but soon his form was lost to sight
And vanished in the shadows of the night.

6

That night I had a strange wild dream
A vision filled with phantasy
I sat beside a Lethean stream
It was the morning, and the gray
And mystic day began to break.
From out the entrails of a cloud
A form appeared that did betake
Angelic habitude, while others stood
Watching that form with marked intensity
I saw their eyes filled with malignancy.

7

And when I woke, the early morn
Looked lovingly upon the bay,
How glad I was to find the storm
Of love and hate had past away.
I watched the sunlight's gentle play,
As in the distance brightly gleaming,
Lighting the hills of Monterey
Like love's caresses golden teaming
The day in splendor wore a summer dress
Giving to Santa Cruz a fond caress.

CANTO II

I left the mountain where I marked the flower
Shedding its odor by the winding brook,
I left the brush-land and the redwood bower
But ere I left I took another look
Of flowers and ferns and hazel bushes growing,
Of mossy banks where tiger lilies bide,
Of rock and dell and limpid waters flowing,
And bunnies that beneath the bunch-grass hide,
I dropped a tear and kis't my nut-brown hand
For love and nature sympathizing stand.

2

I stepped aboard the cars and fondly waved
A last adios to the nestling inn
Crossing the bridge where flowing waters lave
A toneing song to soothe the ear's loud din,
And on we went with serpentinian grace
Now entering where monster redwoods sever
The clouds above—then through a dangerous place
Where rock, and stream and trees blended together,
At last the sacred city came in view
And way beyond the ocean vast and blue.

3

I love the surging sea, and love bestows
Fond tho'ts that lead me into the sublime
The waste of waters with my memory grows
And does not lessen with the waste of time
My father took me o'er the Northern Sea
Full well I knew the wild St. Andrews Bay
The reckless waves make music unto me
And the rude notes stay with me to this day;
And when I see the bay of Santa Cruz
No item of the welkin form I lose.

4

Among the fishermen upon the pier
One afternoon I whiled away my time,
Watching the boats come in and disappear
As they went out to meet the hyaline—
While waiting there a pleasure party came,
And landed at the wharf; my eyes did greet
"The lady of the Casino," for thus her name
Was known by those we call élite,
And by her side Adonis like was placed
The same young man our eyes before embraced.

5

An auto was at hand and they and other two
Went off: "So they have friends," I said
And tried to think no more but still they grew,
And longing to know more I turned my head
And there before my eyes with face averted
Was that dread man gazing with ire
At the flying auto as if converted
Into a watching sphinx, with eyes of fire.
Beholding all, I could not stop my musing
This beauty, love and hate sadly confusing.

6

"Thou demon of the pier," I almost said
What caused thee now to come and go between
Hateful and rank and virulent—I dread
You spoil the very substance of my dream
If I can watch I may prevent
At least find the manner of your measure
And like a blood-hound catch onto the scent
If it costs days and nights, and needs some treasure.
I watched him to the city-front and soon
His bulky form entered a saloon.

7

The sun had sunk beneath the sea
Leaving the burning clouds behind
His cast-off fire is nought to me
Compared with that within my mind
This much I saw, thus much I see,
Tale of the twofold course of life,
The kind and beautiful to be
The direst form of direst strife;
And as I mused, the ocean murmured low
"I am the emblem of life's ebb and flow."

CANTO III

It is the evening hour, and fresh ozone
Is wafted on the gentle breeze that springs
From mountain side; I hear that buzzing tone,
A humming-bird is near, with active wings
From honeysuckle to the eglantine
He moves, and simply does it at the word
Conceived by instinct, answering every time;
Great is the mind that formed the little bird.
I wish to drink fresh water from that fountain
So I will go and visit Hermon Mountain.

2

The song was sung, the prayer was made
And all the ways of grace were found,
Devotion had its every aid,
And benediction walked the ground;
The leader sang a solo, and the choir
Took up the burden with an ardent vim
It seemed to fill the tent with sacred fire
A little bird upon a madrone limb
Was listening—I wondered if its little mind
Took in some meaning that was fond and kind.

3

Love in a bird is love tho' undefined
And has some motive in the God of grace
Warbling evangel where one may find,
Precept and homily and that fond place,
Where it would seem the spirit waftingly
Can fill the soul with peace, not homily
Alone can reach, but that which graftingly,
Makes us alive to Him who made our day.
A little bird sitting upon a limb
May reach the heart, and bring us near to Him.

4

Among the choir fond love was measured in;
A lovely lady with her golden hair,
(For human is the object when we bring
Those graces that make summer in the air).
The first born flowers of April are of gold
I mean the crocus peering through the snow
And though imperfect is the form and mode
They typify this LADY OF THE CASINO.
She sat there like a Scandinavian bride
I did not see her lover by her side.

5

But looking to the right I saw him placed
Beside a lady who I thought might be
The sister of the one we have just traced
She had a portion of her imagery
Her face was not so perfect and her hair
Was what an artist calls a marigold,
So I concluded Danish blood was there
With a complexion that will not grow old;
The noble youth, if we his place assert
Might be put down as young King Athelbert.

6

'Tis good to be acquainted when you see
An object that may better those who go,
Along the pathway in whose imagery
There is a quality of right bestow;
And so an introduction much I sought
And, truth to tell, I introduced myself
It seemed quite natural this way to float
For at a meeting there is no stiff spell,
I spoke unto them both and others too
And from that time a marked acquaintance grew.

7

The heart is fond and may recount this line,
When I, who wrote, and they for whose fond love
I place my garland that it may entwine
Their memory—leave for the land above.
How much does perfect beauty beauteous seem
When it has truth to guide it on its way
If we have nothing but our self-esteem
And deem the world is but a holiday
We lose that prize of endless heavenly treasure
We lose that grace the soul alone can measure.

8

I stood upon the steps and saw them leave.
The lady gave her hand. Adonis said
Some pleasant words—"it would him grieve
"If friendship thus begun should go to bed
"And fall asleep." He spoke to me with face
Honest and true, where I could find
His home near Santa Cruz, a little place—
A cottage with a Woodbine front entwined,
Adding these words, "We live like birds together
Within a nest to hide us from the weather."

9

That evening in the cool and pleasant shade
Among the Sequoia trees I lingered,
Listening to sounds the sounding forest made,
For pensively my mind and nature mingled.
It seemed as if the trees, birds, flowers and all
Were listening to a pleasant evening hymn
And in its measured gentle rise and fall
The soul was speaking to a cherubim,
When all at once a figure to me neared
I started up—the devil had appeared.

10

He passed by quickly, glared like one posses't
And not a word he uttered as he went.
With dreadful terror was my mind impres't
Having no knowledge what was his intent.
The Lethean river can not be defined
It is a stream that evermore is cursed
Its waters tantalize nitrate combined
Preforms its slackless raging demon-thirst;
It therefore took the prayer I silent made
To speed along and leave the forest shade.

II

When evil comes along our joys may fade
But not the purpose kindled by love's flame,
Before the God of Peace my mind was laid,
And presently a gracious answer came.
I sat me down and wrote an ardent letter
Describing all the scenes that I had seen,
The demon man—I could not deem him better—
And how so often he had come between.
Told all I knew and how I deemed it right
To tell of it, when danger was in sight.

CANTO IV

The speckled dove has come from Arazome
The days are warm and through the night
The dew falls silently. Love and a home,
Livens the sanguine birds. The morning bright
Brings me a letter which now I ope.
'Tis from the woodbine cottage by the sea;
It is a goodly note and it brings hope;
'Tis couched in gracious words; the imagery
Has something mystic that I can not cope
Like leaves upon a stream you try to grope.

2

This noble youth, this lady filled with grace
Had come from Alsace near the Rhine.
The demon man, with his repelling face,
Had been a German soldier in his time.
He took a fancy to our lady's mother
But was refused; another wedded her;
This other was the demon soldier's brother,
And since that time it did his wrath incur
But why he followed them they could not tell,
They had no part in what before befell.

3

Again I left the woodland shade
And visited the ocean shore
I found the cottage love had made
Covered with woodbine o'er and o'er.
The charming lady of Casino grace
Gave me her hand and took my hat,
I surely found a resting place
And pleasantly began to chat.
It is a pleasant thing when thus you roam
To find Platonic friendship in a home.

4

And in this happy social mood
King Athelbertus op'ed the door.
There like a prince of blood he stood.
I did not eye him o'er and o'er
But like as I had been his friend
I rose and took his manly hand
And presently our talk did wend
Its way where genial thoughts commend
A real measure in that untaught way
That makes true life a pleasant homily.

5

They sang the songs I love to hear—
The Rhineish songs the Ritters bore.
Sometime their passion brought a tear,
Their swinging measure struck the core.
Then followed many a mighty phrase
Of Mozart with his liquid measure
And Handel with his song of praise
Op'ed up a sacred treasure;
The lady moon was shining on the bay
And still I drank in music's phantasy.

6

And there were measures of the sweet Mignon
And blending of heroic Aleaste
And Lohengrin came powerful and strong—
Love, hate and tyranny in stern array.
The night wore on, it was replete
Anon with dark abysmal time
And then like roses in a bower sweet
Their odor mellowing the thoughts of crime—
It was like winter when the stormclouds lower
Then fresh and fair like April's first-born flower.

7

'Twas late, the moon resignedly
Beneath the sea had hid her face
As if she said consignedly,
"The stars will occupy my place."
They sang a song that brought them near
To sunny scenes of Fatherland,
And in its burden dropped a tear
Holding each other by the hand.
Then each one smiled so courteous and bright
Entreating me to linger over night.

CANTO V

The summer birds have left the hill
Where chicken weed and peavines grow
In patches by the fructive rill
Or on the chaparral plateau
Their instinct and the future need
Find a refuge from the weather—
A warmer climate there to feed
And keep their families together—
And so they flit and find another home
Among the welkin wilds of Arizome.

2

The fructive autumn days are past
And from the south black clouds appear;
The winter speaks out with a blast:
"I wish to tell you I am here."
I sit alone within my home
The fire is burning cheerily
The sun's gone down, I hear a moan
Among the trees so wearily.
I watch the blazing fire, its rise and fall
Making those changing shadows on the wall.

3

O, listen to the wind and rain
Beating against my cottage wall,
Bespattering the window-pane
And singing 'midst the pine trees tall;
I wonder if the shepherd boy
Has taken care of all his sheep
Or if the man they do employ
To house the stock has gone asleep,
Or if the people in the woodbine cot
Are thinking thoughts that mean "forget me not."

4

That night the wind blew strong and fierce
As on my couch I listened to
The beating rain, that seemed to pierce
The boards and shingles through and through;
The rain came tumbling down the hill
And in the creek the sand and drift
Was moving onward with a will
While sticks of timber got a lift;
Lorenzo river soon will have a rising
If this continues that will be surprising.

5

Next morn the storm king did not cease
Throughout the day it kept on raining
A famous time for ducks and geese
Or aqua men that needed training.
I stood beside the bridge that day
Watching Lorenzo booming big
I saw the driftwood borne away
Old roofs and hencoops and a pig
That had been boarding near the stream
With too much water with its board I ween.

6

Tempestuous storms have their time
And sunshine follows in their wake,
The changing nature is sublime
Subdued and fashioned for man's sake;
I walked abroad to view the land
Old Phœbus shining on the hill
I felt the comfort of his hand
And listened to Ahithophel,
For e'en the blue-jays made a gladsome call
Mingling with blackbirds, robins, quail and all.

7

The little globule on the leaf
Spoke to the sunbeam in its eye
"My term of life is spare and brief
But love and light will never die;"
And the brown leaflets drifting by
Like waifs upon the yellow lift
Seemed with the stream to heave a sigh,
Commingling with the passing drift
I mused upon the homily of time
And lingered with my thoughts that were sublime.

CANTO VI

I love to see the mist at break of day
And powerful Phœbus coming with a gift
Of glory in his face, drive it away
His flaming chariot riding o'er the lift—
While the young morning sings a pulsing song
Of joy with prestanola touch,
The scene is masterly sublime and strong
And graced with beauty of an arder such
As hands divine can handle and control,
Awakening the music of the soul.

2

The scenes around Lorenzo have the air
Of fairyland, the spreading maple trees
That rise upon the sloping bank so fair
And the green bay that perfumes every breeze
The graceful birch, the willows growing rank
The river formed in nature's wanton chasing
The Sequoia rising on the nether bank
The jutting point with tiger lilies gracing
The flowing stream. The rushing storms are past,
And fishermen begin to make their cast.

3

Time has its turn and nature great and vast
Revivifies. I'll visit where the ocean laved
Its melody. I linger with the past,
And wonder how the stormy king behaved
With those I love; the little cottage bright
With incident within my soul revives
And I am anxious more to see the light
Shine in the Lady of Casino's eyes,
And see again the cottage by the sea
With woodbine covering and music's melody.

4

I longed to see the ones I love
With blest compulsion in my heart
Wishing the pinions of a dove
Would give me a prophetic start;
But lacking pinions large enough
I simply used my horse and cart
And took the road, though rather rough
Avoiding stones with all my art,
And after making quite a muddy drive
This child beside the cottage did arrive.

5

I looked around; the blinds were down
The storm had reached the cottage door
The woodbine looked so sere and brown
And naught seemed as it was before.
I rang the bell without response
It was a lone, deserted place
My footsteps made the only sound
And no one's presence could I trace
Nor find what to me had been so sweet
The Lady of Casino and her cheering greet.

6

And wond'ring thus with sinking heart,
A man's voice called and did me hail,
I turned about with sudden start
And listened to an untold tale
He said that some great mystery
Had happened on the old cliff drive
And how to find its history
The officers of law did strive,
We got aboard my cart and drove along
My brain was burning, but my heart was strong.

7

We drove along that old cliff drive
We reached the arch made by the sea
And there a lonely auto stood
Deserted by its company
And by this auto on the ground
Was found the footprints of a man
And searching round they also found
A lady's necktie and a fan;
A crowd had gathered by this time
For crowds love mystery and crime.

8

About that auto, where it stood,
And the lone cottage by the sea
There was collected livelihood
Drawn thither by this mystery;
The sheriff in his legal way
Removed the auto from the cliff
He held a conference that day
Proposing questions rather stiff;
And last some good detectives made their stand
And took the strange set mystery in hand.

9

The sea, the beach, the sounding waves,
Are consciousless of what we feel
They sing a requiem o'er the grave
When they our precious treasure steal,
They sing for joy, they know it not,
They cry for victims every day,
Whether the victim does a crime
Or is out on a holiday,
Or in despair commingles with the wave,
Seeking repose where angry waters lave.

10

I tried to sleep, and through the night
A vision came before my soul
It was not dark, it was not bright
But strangely marked with parabole
I saw the fair Casinian Queen,
The demon man I sure did see,
I saw her face with lustrous sheen;
The demon man seemed strange to me
I thought I saw his form encased in foam,
And in his hair sea-urchins made their home.

CANTO VII

Next night I stood upon the cliff
Watching the moon and one lone star
It did appear to me as if
Within my soul there was debar
Of reason—will and motive slain
They had no force because my mind
Could not the Alchyminian gain;
Clouds and eclipses can not be defined;
What made the pious moon with borrowed light
Kiss with her golden lips the sea so bright?

2

While looking on my mind would burn
And then take on a milder cast
Assuming the prophetic turn
That grasps the earth and ocean vast;
Whether it was a vivid dream
Or trance that lifted me away
I do not know, nor do I deem
It good to know it normally,
But this I know I left what did appear
This earth and was conversant in another sphere.

3

Time laughs at us, poor wanton time
That brings our penalty in view
It may kill beauty in my rhyme,
But grace is ever fresh and new,
It places one within the sphere,
That gives to life its comely face
Bringing celestial pictures near
So bright is this celestial grace—
What's beauty, grace, or energy or wit,
Unless we have the soul to live with it.

4

A voice that sounded like a flood
Of waters breaking far away
Came near to me and o'er me stood
And then I heard a clear relay
Of trumpets and a voice spoke out
"Come to the feast, ye birds of prey
"Touch not the meek or the devout
"But eat up those that mar the way."
A host of angels made reply
To Him who had the allseeing eye.

5

"Mention the name," the foremost said.
"What name?" I said—my heart was still.
"The name of Him who raised the dead
"And ruleth when and where He will"
(I said the name, then all was changed.)
'Twas not the sun that brought that gleam
That in and out my being came
With its deep joy it did not seem,
Of earth but was a heavenly flame,
Earth has its joy, that time may wed away,
But this is joy that links eternity.

6

Then Came the Summons:

"Stand forth, strong angel, with man's fate
"Sound on the earth the fatal call
"The flesh of captains must be ate
"Stand in the sun and on the wall
"Let buzzards sit, they have their store."
Remorseless is the tiger's jaw
The fatal savage ways of yore,
That kings are wont to call God's law—
This is the penalty. When done release
The blessed Jordan dove of peace.

CANTO VIII

Love keeps no reckoning of wasted time
E'en tho' vile hate contaminates its way
And yet I hold that all abortive crime,
Can not prevent its all efficient sway
So time went on some two weeks from the day
The mystery took place upon the cliff
The ocean opened up its progeny
The demon man was found both stark and stiff
His swollen out body lay upon the sand
He held a picture in his clasped hand.

2

I gazed and said "O, my prophetic soul
"The picture is the lady's sainted mother"
I nursed the secret, kept it in control,
The man who married her is this man's brother
But why and wherefore he had come to this
Was mere conjecture, why he followed up
The Lady Casino with a serpent's hiss
And he himself had drunk the bitter cup,
I leave it to detectives to unwind the turns
Men of research like the detective Burns.

3

They questioned me, I told them what I knew
They wrote it down, they called on me for aid,
As time went on, time with the mystery grew
And kept its sway at last was laid
The case upon the shelf as autumn's gain
Is laid in store till rugged winter comes
Waiting for consummation of the same
That hidden things might come out true and plain.
The cottage home, the cliff, the restless sea
Were music uncompleted, that would be.

CANTO IX

The spring is past, the flowers of June have come
The fruit birds hop around on every bough
Youth and the day comminglingly are one
And the rich roses say, "Look at us now."
I have a letter from a far off friend
A castle on the Rhine in old Lorraine
There is music in its words for they portend
The mystery made very clear and plain;
On it are placed both strength and love
A lion in protecting a white dove.

2

The Lady of Casino and her friend
The duke of Athelbert are now made one
Like double cherries they are now one end,
One purpose and one will.—This is the sum
The demon man had watched them day and night
They deemed it prudent, so they made a plot
They could not keep far from his searching sight
They left their auto in the very spot
Where it was found, leaving a necktie and a fan
That they might mystify the demon man.

3

He came along, saw what had been done,
And in his frenzy leaped into the sea.
They were quite sad to think it run
This way; and Athelbert and she
Left secretly, and landed in Lorraine
And there they were united; the news came
Of the fell tragedy, and although not to blame
They enjoined secrecy, because their name
And what took place if published would create
Sorrow on others for the poor man's sake.

4

Life may be tragedy, but there is One
Who holds the secret of the way of living
Who guides the elements as does the sun
Who pardons our misdeeds, whose heart is giving
Life love and strength to every willing soul,
Who turns our passions, leads us on the way
Who gives us power to practice self-control
Who gives us hope, and turns our night to day
And if we place our daily life within his sway
Demons may follow but cherubims will lead the way.

EPILOGUE

Germana

Land of the beautiful and free,
This double tale is meant for thee.
Sweet maiden with the golden hair,
Land of bright youth, without compare;
The demon man who breathed thy air
Will die with urchins in his hair,
But as the bud springs from the tree,
Sweet flowers of troth will come to thee,
And He who marked the sparrow's fall
Will give thee songs Ahithophel.
Then shall the Rhine resound thy praise,
Deeper than songs the Ritters raise,
And warbling birds upon thy banks,
Will symphonate a note of thanks.
The wafting air will give a tone
From God's life-giving rare ozone.
And nations with their hand and heart
Extol thy life, thy love, thy art—
Will live with thee,—while time's increase
Will chase out time, for time will cease,
As the strong angel merging sea and land
Gives out his counsel, and extends his hand.

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